

For Immediate Release

** Please add to all event listings **

LOVE, OPERA & ESPIONAGE: *MR. SHI AND HIS LOVER* MARKS SUMMERWORKS' FIRST-EVER CHINESE-LANGUAGE PRODUCTION

JUNE 1, 2016 (TORONTO) – The North American premiere of *Mr. Shi and His Lover* will touch down at the SummerWorks Performance Festival in August 2016. Featuring an international cast and performed entirely in Mandarin with English surtitles, this vivid contemporary Chinese music theatre piece created by artists from Toronto and Macau marks the first-ever Chinese-language production in the Festival's 26-year history.

Inspired by the enigmatic real-life story of a Chinese opera performer and his French Diplomat lover who believed him to be a woman, this intimate two-hander re-imagines the characters' innermost thoughts to illuminate their mysterious affair and the ensuing espionage scandal that rocked the political world in the 1980s. Stylistically varied and emotionally rich, the score draws inspiration from opera, musical, and vintage popular music from both East and West.

Praised by the Taiwanese press as "gentle and elegant, yet possesses a determination that dares to dream", *Mr. Shi and His Lover* is a collaboration between Macau playwright **Wong Teng Chi** (*Amsterdam Études*, Hiu Kok), director **Johnny Tam** (*Golden Dragon*, Shanghai Dramatic Arts Center) and Toronto composer **Njo Kong Kie** (*Infinity*, Volcano/Tarragon; *knotty together* and *La Señorita Mundo*, SummerWorks; *Picnic in the Cemetery*, Edinburgh Fringe).

Mr. Shi and His Lover offers a rare opportunity for Canadian audiences to revel in the beauty, passion and rich storytelling of modern Chinese music theatre. Featuring **Jordan Cheng** (*Art School Musical*, Edward Lam Dance Theatre) as Mr. Shi and **Derek Kwan** (*Blood Wedding*, Aluna Theatre/Modern Times; *The Lesson of Da Ji*, Toronto Masque Theatre) as his lover, this SummerWorks Special Presentation is a co-production by Music Picnic, Macau Experimental Theatre, and Point View Art Association.

Music Picnic is a music and theatre production company led by Toronto-based pianist and composer **Njo Kong Kie**. His compositions have reached music, theatre, and dance audiences internationally. www.musicpicnic.com

Macau Experimental Theatre is a non-profit theatre company with the mission to promote local theatrical art and enhance performers' professionalism and techniques. Formerly known as the Horizon Theatre (Macau), MET was founded in 2008 and has presented more than 30 productions to date. www.mexptheatre.com

Point View Art Association is a non-profit arts and cultural organization based in Macau. Its mandate includes the production of arts and cultural creations, the promotion of arts education and research, audience development, and exchange and international collaboration. pvaa.weebly.com

SummerWorks Performance Festival is Canada's largest curated performance festival of theatre, dance, music, and live art. From the first Thursday of every August and running for 11 days, SummerWorks takes over Queen Street West in a celebration of new and essential Canadian voices. www.summerworks.ca

Mr. Shi and His Lover

Performed in Mandarin with English surtitles

Location:

The Theatre Centre (Mainspace)
1115 Queen St. West, Toronto, ON
www.theatrecentre.org

Runtime:

Approximately 80 minutes with no intermission

Dates:

Thurs Aug 5, 8:00pm (Opening)
Sat Aug 6, 9:15pm
Sun Aug 7, 6:30pm
Mon Aug 8, 9:00pm
Thurs Aug 11, 5:15pm
Fri Aug 12, 10:15pm
Sat Aug 13, 1:15pm

Tickets: \$15 + applicable fees
Save with a pass!

Online: summerworks.ca

In Person:

Factory Theatre (as of August 2)
125 Bathurst St., Toronto, ON

At the Door:

One hour ahead of showtime
The Theatre Centre
1115 Queen St. West, Toronto, ON

Connect With Us: @MusicPicnicTO #SWmrshi #operaspy

More Info: www.mrshiandhislover.com

Connect With SummerWorks: @SummerWorks #SW16

Media Contact: **Dylan On**, mrshi.summerworks@gmail.com, 647-874-0788